

retyped 10-10-73

Form 10-300  
(Rev. 6-72)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE:	Kansas
COUNTY:	Miami
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY DATE	

<b>1. NAME</b>	
COMMON:	John Brown Cabin
AND/OR HISTORIC:	Samuel Adair Cabin

<b>2. LOCATION</b>			
STREET AND NUMBER: John Brown Memorial Park , E 1/2 of NE 1/4 of S 10, T 18, R 22			
CITY OR TOWN: Osawatomie		CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: No. 3, Rep. Larry Winn	
STATE Kansas	CODE 20	COUNTY: Miami	CODE 121

<b>3. CLASSIFICATION</b>			
CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ Comments _____

<b>4. OWNER OF PROPERTY</b>			
OWNER'S NAME: State of Kansas			
STREET AND NUMBER: State Capitol			
CITY OR TOWN: Topeka		STATE: Kansas	CODE 20

<b>5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION</b>			
COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC: Register of Deeds			
STREET AND NUMBER: Miami County Courthouse			
CITY OR TOWN: Paola		STATE: Kansas	CODE 20

<b>6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS</b>			
TITLE OF SURVEY: Historic American Buildings Survey			
DATE OF SURVEY: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Federal <input type="checkbox"/> State <input type="checkbox"/> County <input type="checkbox"/> Local			
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Library of Congress			
STREET AND NUMBER:			
CITY OR TOWN: Washington		STATE: D. C.	CODE 08

STATE: Kansas	COUNTY: Miami	ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

## 8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- ☐ Pre-Columbian    ☐ 16th Century    ☐ 18th Century    ☐ 20th Century  
☐ 15th Century    ☐ 17th Century    ☒ 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1854-1858

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |   |                                      |   |  |
|---|--------------------------------------|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal     | <input type="checkbox"/> Education   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Political           | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric    | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy            | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic       | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry    | <input type="checkbox"/> Science                        | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture    | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention   | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture                      | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture   | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art            | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature  | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater                        | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce       | <input type="checkbox"/> Military    | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation                 | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music       |   |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation   |                                      |   |  |

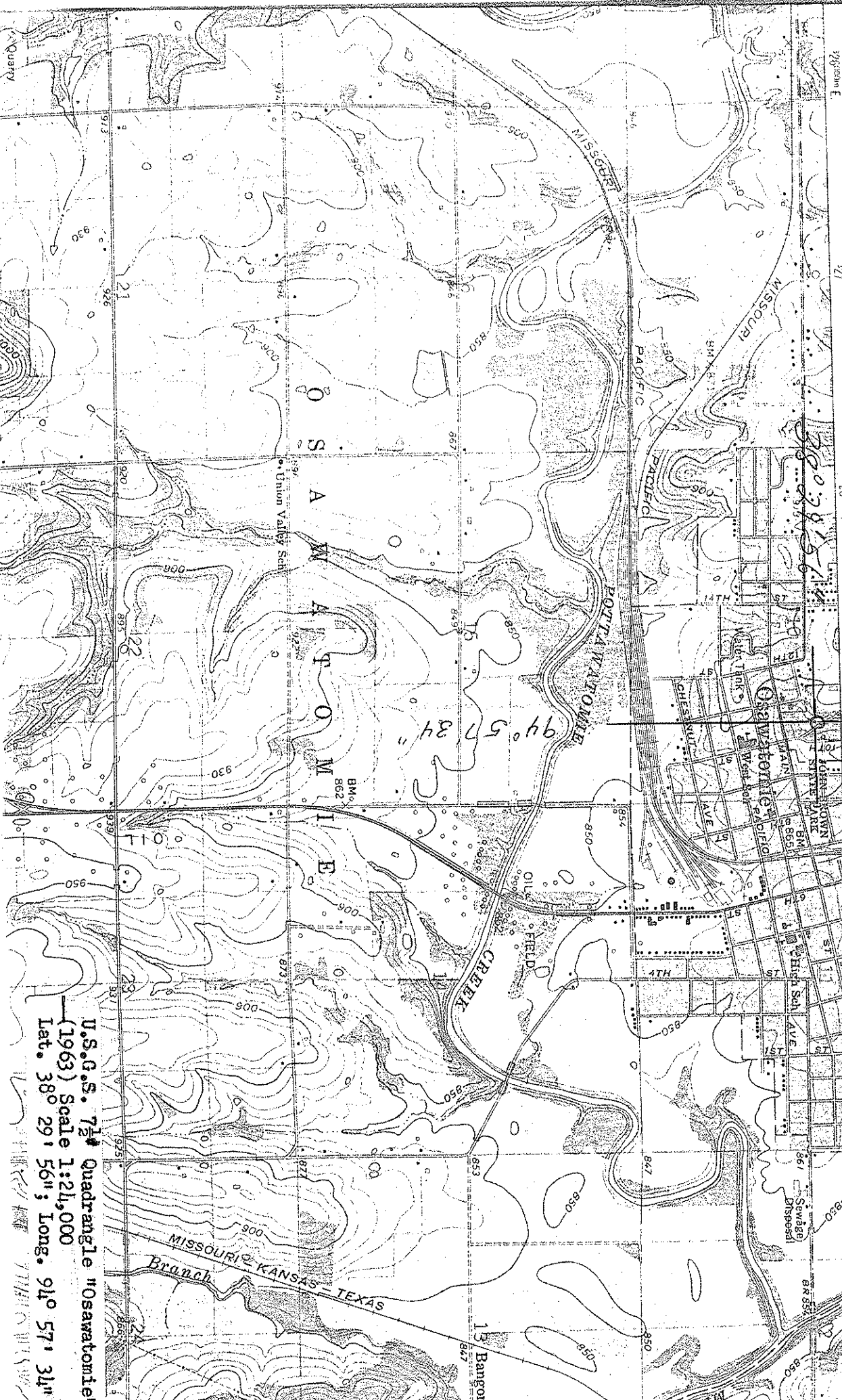
STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

John Brown came to Osawatomie in October, 1855, after five of his sons, who had come in the spring, had appealed to him for help against harassment by Proslavery elements. While in Kansas, he was involved in a number of incidents that kept feelings stirred up in the eastern Kansas counties in the so-called "Bleeding Kansas" era. The "battle" of Osawatomie on August 30, 1856, was one such skirmish.

Although he lived in Kansas for only about 20 months during his entire life, John Brown's activities have been closely associated with the state.

The Samuel Adair Cabin, usually called the "John Brown Cabin," was frequently visited by Brown and occasionally served as his headquarters.

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY



109 1 KANSAS CITY 31 MI.  
PAOLA 5 MI.  
7061 III SW  
(PAOLA WEST)

U.S.G.S. 7 1/2" Quadrangle "Osawatimie"  
(1963) Scale 1:24,000  
Lat. 38° 29' 56"; Long. 94° 57' 34"

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The National Register nomination for John Brown Cabin (c. 1854, c. 1912, c. 1928, c. 1995) in the John Brown Memorial Park in Osawatomie, Kansas is being amended to clarify the boundaries of the nominated property. Additional descriptive and contextual information is also being provided.

The cabin, the stone pavilion that houses the cabin, and a small perimeter of land around the structure are listed on the National Register. The boundaries encompass one acre and stand on the SE ¼ SW ¼ SE ¼ NE ¼ S. 10- T. 18S- R. 22E. The UTM coordinates are 15/ 329200/ 4262840.

The property stands on a rise and is part of a 22-acre parcel owned by the State of Kansas. With the exception of the cabin and the acre it stands on, the State leases the land to the City of Osawatomie under a 99-year lease that expires in 2064. The land is utilized as a public park.

Built about a mile west of Osawatomie, the log cabin was dismantled and reassembled in its present location, John Brown Memorial Park, in 1912. A stone pavilion was constructed around the cabin in 1928. The property is operated as a historic site by the State of Kansas.

In 1995 a fire damaged the cabin and the stone pavilion. Restoration work took several years. The site reopened on August 30, 1998, the anniversary date of the Battle of Osawatomie.

The rustic 18 by 20 feet log cabin was described by Samuel Adair this way:

*A chimney built with sticks and mud- jambs and backwall and hearth of stone, two doors- half a floor that made of puncheons-that is, timber split and hewd. The house is chinked in the cracks, partly dabbled with mud on the outside. It has no windows, but in lieu of them the cracks between the logs in the gable end towards the east are left open for the light to shine through. (McFarland, p. 145)*

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Built in 1854, the cabin contains a living room, kitchen, and loft. These rooms were whitewashed during the Samuel Adair residency, although probably not until after the Civil War. (McFarland, p. 197) A dry-laid, stone chimney rises from the cabin's eastern wall. The cabin was occupied as a private residence until 1904.

The *Historic Souvenir of Osawatomie and Environs* Souvenir Program, published in 1910, contains a picture of the cabin with a lean-to addition to the rear, covered by a raised, standing seam metal roof. A one-and-a-half story, frame house stands in front of or attached to the cabin. A limited number of double hung sash light the cabin. These windows were added after the Bleeding Kansas era.

The side-gable roofed structure is encased inside a stone pavilion. The pavilion is rectangular, surmounted by a gently sloped hipped roof. Rusticated stone blocks of various sizes are laid in a semi-random pattern to comprise the pavilion walls. Two large, tripartite, arched windows fenestrate each elevation. Multi-paned, fixed and casement windows are utilized in each opening. These windows flank larger tripartite center doors on all elevations but the rear, where a window is used instead. The fenestration treatment for the doors and larger window is also multi-paned. Double, multi-paned doors provide access into the pavilion. The arched openings are accentuated by rusticated stone voussoirs and keystones.

Both the pavilion and the cabin maintain a southern façade orientation. A walkway of approximately ten feet runs between the cabin and pavilion wall.

The present interior wall treatments reveal bare logs and chinking. The two-room log cabin is airy and well-lit due to the indirect light from the pavilion windows. A low, rustic beamed ceiling defines the main room, which contains the fireplace and hearth. The loft is very dark and cramped, perhaps providing a more authentic feel of the Bleeding Kansas era.

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The John Brown Cabin (c. 1854, c. 1912, c. 1928, c. 1995) recognizes the history of Bleeding Kansas. The cabin was the territorial home of Rev. Samuel L. Adair (1811-1898) and his wife Florella Brown Adair (1816-1865). Through its association with the Battle of Osawatomie (August 30, 1856) and abolitionist John Brown (1800-1859), the cabin gained notoriety in the events of the Bleeding Kansas era.

The John Brown Cabin National Register nomination is being amended to clarify the boundaries of the nominated property. Additional descriptive and contextual information is also being provided.

Congregationalist minister Samuel L. Adair lived in the cabin from 1855 until his death in 1898. In 1912 the cabin was dismantled and moved to the site of the Battle of Osawatomie, about a mile east of its original location. The battle site had been acquired by the State of Kansas in 1910 and commemorated as the John Brown Memorial Park. The state maintains ownership of the cabin and park to this day, operating the cabin as a historic site and leasing the remainder of the land to the City of Osawatomie for use as a park.

With financial backing from the New York based American Missionary Association (AMA), Osawatomie was settled by a small party of free-state families in October 1854. Ohioan Adair and his family traveled with this group, founding the Osawatomie Congregational Church. Oberlin College-educated Adair was commissioned by the AMA as a Congregationalist pastor in 1851. His dream to serve as a missionary was realized when the AMA approved his application in August 1854 to settle in Kansas Territory. (McFarland, p. 140)

The passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act in May 1854 opened the Kansas territory for settlement. Determined to reserve the territory as a free-state, Northern abolitionists financed the emigration of anti-slavery settlers from New England and other free-states. Sponsored by the New England Emigrant Aid Company, the first such free-state settlement occurred in Lawrence in August 1854. The New England Emigrant Aid

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Company based its financial sponsorship on the investments of wealthy abolitionists who sought to earn dividends on the organized emigration of free labor into Kansas, in addition to securing free-state status for the territory. Well-heeled groups like the New England Emigrant Aid Company provided financial backing to religious groups like the AMA, whose missionary cause involved the abolition of slavery and adoption of racial justice.

In March 1855, Adair and his family moved into a crude log house about a mile west of Osawatomie. Built the year before by squatter Samuel Glenn, it had no windows and a chimney made of sticks and mud. The small cabin with two rooms and a loft, sheltered Adair, his wife Florella and their children as well as many relatives, friends, and fugitive slaves in the years before the Civil War. Its association with John Brown may not have been as distinctly recognized and later commemorated if it had not been for Brown's relationship with Florella Adair, who was Brown's half-sister.

Correspondence in 1854 and 1855 between the Adairs and their family in Ohio talks of the beautiful land and opportunity the Kansas Territory offered. (SenGupta, pp. 65- 66). Attracted by the free-state cause and very likely the opportunity to begin again, John Brown followed his sons to Kansas in October 1855. Connecticut-born Brown had worked as a farmer, wool merchant, land surveyor and tanner, living in Hudson, Ohio and Richmond, Pennsylvania before moving to a freedmen's settlement in North Elba, New York. Brown settled his family on donated land in the black community in 1849.

Raised in a deeply religious household that opposed slavery, Brown's family moved to Ohio when he was five. Brown originally intended to become a Congregationalist minister and through the years developed a strong belief in the merits of the anti-slavery cause. Following the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act in 1850, Brown helped to found and actively recruited members in the League of Gileadites, an organization that worked to bring fugitive slaves to freedom.

By early 1856 Kansas had two territorial governments, the free-state faction and the proslavery faction. Each government's claim to legitimacy sparked the bitter conflict that

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is called Bleeding Kansas. The first territorial election was held in October 1855. Three thousand registered voters, mostly northern, free-state emigrants, cast their ballots in favor of a state based on abolitionist principles. However, an equal number of proslavery ballots were cast illegally by Missourians crossing the border. Subsequently, the proslavery legislature passed a series of laws designed to drive free-staters out of the territory. While Brown did not vote in the first territorial election, he did attend the April 1856 meeting in Osawatomie where free-staters condemned the actions of the proslavery faction, and is viewed as igniting the violence between the two factions that erupted in May 1856. (Etcheson, p. 108, 111)

On May 21, 1856 a band of proslavery guerillas sacked the free-state stronghold of Lawrence, killing no one but destroying much property. Brown was infuriated by the attack on Lawrence and outraged that the free-staters were offered such weak resistance. (SenGupta, 1996, p. 112; McFarland, p. 149) Leading a party of six, including three of his sons, Brown attacked a proslavery settlement along Pottawatomie Creek on May 24-25, 1856 hacking five men to death. The free-state settlers of Osawatomie were not happy about Brown's role in the Pottawatomie Massacre. Writing to the AMA, Samuel Adair condemned the attack as a "base, barbarous, and horrible murder." (McFarland, p. 150)

In early June 1856 proslavery sympathizers burned Brownsville, where Brown and his sons lived, and looted and drove off livestock in Osawatomie. These events were followed by the Battle of Blackjack on June 2, 1856 where Brown led a company against the proslavery forces of Henry Pate, and won the engagement.

Open warfare escalated at the Battle of Osawatomie on August 30, 1856. Under the command of John W. Reid, four hundred proslavery troops engaged a small, unprepared group of free-state supporters, leaving several dead, including Brown's son Frederick. The forces burned the town of Osawatomie with its thirty some buildings. Samuel and Florella Adair's cabin was spared, although it was approached by troops looking for Brown.



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After the battle, federal troops were sent into the territory in an effort to control the explosive violence. While the conflicts gradually subsided, the tension over the slavery question intensified.

In the two-and-a-half years following the Battle of Osawatomie, Brown led numerous raids into Missouri to free slaves, leading them into Kansas for their first days of freedom. One famous account tells of Brown arriving at the Adair's cabin on Christmas night, 1858, with eleven fugitive slaves that he had rescued from Missouri. (SenGupta, 1993, p. 200; 1996, p. 66) The slaves were hidden for the night in the small cabin, and the next morning moved north towards Lawrence.

Between 1855 and 1859, over three hundred escaped slaves traveled the underground railroad route through Lawrence, into Iowa and eventually into Canada. (SenGupta, 1996, pp. 65- 66) While the AMA directed its ministers to avoid political activity, documentation suggests that Christian abolitionists like Samuel Adair sheltered and aided the safe transport of fugitive slaves. (SenGupta, 1993, p. 209)

Samuel Adair became the military chaplain at Ft. Leavenworth during the Civil War. Florella stayed at the cabin until her ill-health caused her to join Samuel in Leavenworth, where she died in 1865. Adair returned to Osawatomie and helped establish the first insane asylum in the state (later known as Osawatomie State Hospital). He died in 1898, leaving the cabin to his son Charles Adair.

John Brown worked toward the anti-slavery cause until his execution at Harper's Ferry, West Virginia on December 2, 1859. Brown traveled the country, fund-raising, recruiting, freeing slaves, and making occasional visits to his family in North Elba. Historians have written that Brown was mentally instable, and his condition contributed to his extremely strong commitment to the abolitionist cause, which he pursued with a sense of religious fervor. (SenGupta, 1996, pp. 111- 112)

On August 30, 1910, former President Theodore Roosevelt gave the keynote address at the celebration marking the fiftieth anniversary of the Battle of Osawatomie and the formal dedication of the battlefield as a permanent park. Two years later the Adair cabin

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was dismantled and removed to the John Brown Memorial Park, where it is known as the John Brown Cabin.

The *Kansas City Star* noted that each piece "is [was] numbered as it is [was] removed so that no alteration will be [was] made when the cabin is reconstructed in the park. The puncheons in the floors, the stout oaken logs and the roof are still in an excellent state of preservation." (*Kansas City Star*, September 8, 1912). However, in 1928 the State of Kansas appropriated \$6,000 for the erection of "a stone pergola over the John Brown Cabin which was rapidly rotting away." (January, Miami County Clippings, p. 201).

The property stands on a rise and is part of a 22-acre parcel owned by the State of Kansas. The State leases the land to the City of Osawatomie under a 99-year lease that expires in 2064. The land is utilized as a public park. In 1995 a fire damaged the cabin and the stone pavilion. Restoration work took several years, and the site reopened on August 30, 1998, the anniversary date of the Battle of Osawatomie.

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**Bibliography:**

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January, Anna L. "John Brown's Cabin." Miami County Clippings. Vol. 2. 1874- 1940. Kansas State Historical Society. (pp. 200- 202).

Kansas City Star. September 8, 1912.

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SenGupta, Gunja. "Servants for Freedom: Christian Abolitionists in Territorial Kansas, 1854- 1858." *Kansas History: A Journal of the Central Plains*. Vol. 16, No. 3 Autumn 1993. (200- 213).

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**Verbal Boundary Description**

The cabin, the stone pavilion that houses the cabin and a small perimeter of land around the structure are listed on the National Register. The boundaries encompass one-acre and stand on the SE  $\frac{1}{4}$  WS  $\frac{1}{4}$  SE  $\frac{1}{4}$  NE  $\frac{1}{4}$  S. 10- T. 18S- R. 22E. The property stands on a rise and is part of a 22-acre parcel owned by the State of Kansas.

**Boundary Justification**

The nominated property stands in a memorial park that contains many resources. The structure was moved to this location in 1912 and enclosed in a stone pavilion in 1928.

**UTM Coordinates**

15/ 329200/ 4262840.

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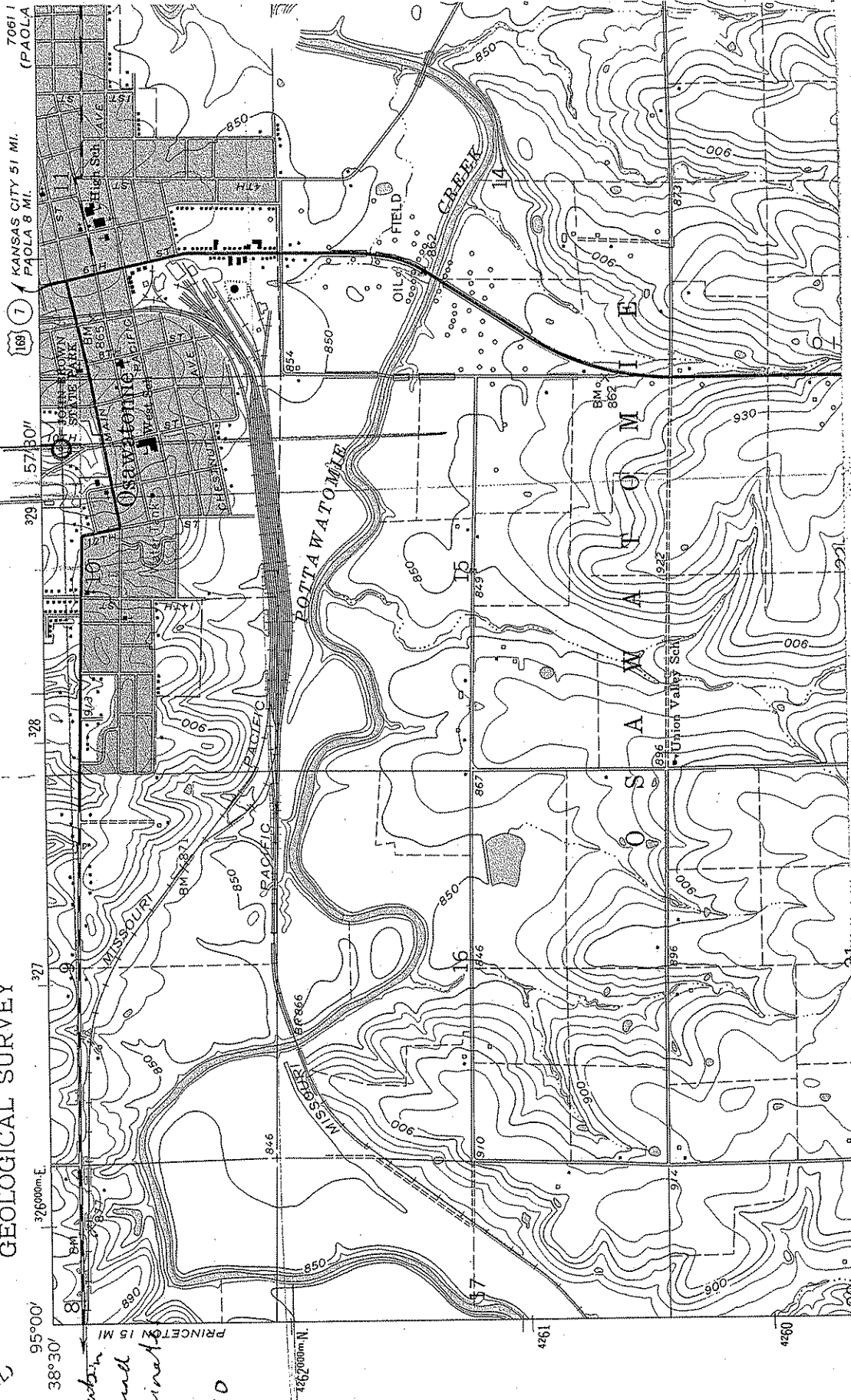
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UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

6661 II SE  
(RANTOUL)

John Brown Cabin  
Osawatimie Quad  
UTM Coordinates  
15 329200  
4262840



7061 I  
(PAOLA)

169  
KANSAS CITY 51 MI.  
PAOLA 8 MI.

329 57°30'

328

327

326000m E

95°00'

38°30'

426000m N

4260

4260

4260

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